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THE SAVIOR.

A tragi- comedy in three acts.

by

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[redacted]

PERSONS

(Named in the order of their appearance.)

A woman

Mrs. Mason

Henry Mason

Tom Cooley

A Negro

Sophie

Florence Ray

Mrs. Ray

A gentleman

Four expressmen

The scenesof the first and third acts are laid at Henry Mason's picture-frame store. The one of the second act in a newly furnished apartment of a residential neighborhood, inthe suburb of New-York.

The occurrences of the first act take place in the month of April, of the second and third,six weeks later., in the time present .

THE SAVIOR.

THE FIRST ACT.

HENRY MASON'S store of picture-frames. At right is the main entrance alongside with the big show-window. The latter is covered halfways with framed pictures, precluding the view of the passers-by. At left center is a door into a back-room. Another door opens on a flight of steps leading up to the second floor. The passage-way from the main entrance into the interior of the store is rather circuitious; mouldings and other materials having been placed in such a way, as to conceal from the incomers the back of the store. The audience has the view of the whole place. An oblong table with chairs between both doors and near center left is covered with tools and unfinished work. A trunk stands near by. Right near the entrance is a kind of counter. The walls are covered with pictures and frames of various sizes and makes. Among the pictures mostly enlarged photographs are a few etchings, reproductions of the old masters. The most conspicuous of all is a life-sized painting of the Christ leaning against the work-table. Through the upper part of the show-window are seen a few windows of lofts with lettering on them. A subdued rattle of outside traffic is heard to increase each time the door is opened. A bell at same announces every entrance.

It is a late afternoon.

When the curtain goes up, the stage is empty. Soon after, enters a middle-aged woman. She remains waiting at the door, but seeing nobody approach, she advances into the interior, tapping on the table qietly, then bolder.

MRS. MASON comes down the stairs. She is a woman of over fifty with grizzly hair, slow in movements and manner.

MRS. MASON

Yes Ma'am ?

THE WOMAN

Nobody in ? I've been waiting here for half an hour !

MRS. MASON

Beg pardon ! My son will be in any minute. What is it you wish please ?

THE WOMAN

I want my pictures .

MRS. MASON

Your pictures ? I really dont know as I -

THE WOMAN

(angrily)
Of course you dont know ! Ive been coming here for the last six weeks. Its a shame ! Always being promised for tomorrow !

MRS. MASON

(Meekly.)
I know - but wont you please excuse him this once ? The boy was sick -

THE WOMAN

Sick ! I've heard this tale for the last six weeks !

HENRY MASON enters main door. He is thirty, goodlooking , chestnut hair and goatee. He limps slightly, which is however hardly perceptible on account of the many interruptions in the passage-way. Seeing his moth mother with the woman , he accelerates his movements, and taking out two books from his pocket, he throws them on the table.

HENRY

Yes Ma'am ? -

THE WOMAN

(With indignation.)
See ? - He dont even know me -

HENRY

Pardon me,-you left some pictures here, I believe -

THE WOMAN

I should say I did !

HENRY

Now wait a minute - let me see - arent they two groups of eight by ten ?

THE WOMAN

Yes - !

HENRY

I see. Well I'm sorry, but they are not done yet .

THE WOMAN

What, now yet ? !

HENRY

But I promise tomorrow four o'clock -

THE WOMAN

You promise ! Tomorrow ! Four o'clock ! That's exactly what you said the first day ! Tomorrow four o'clock ! And you kept me going here for the last six weeks!

MRS. MASON

(Placatingly)
It'll be allright, It'll be allright -

HENRY WOMAN.

My mother probably told you I was sick. But I promise tomorrow sure -

THE WOMAN

Indeed ! I'll tell you what - You better give me back my pictures. I'll have 'em done elsewhere .

HENRY

I'm sorry, but I dont know where they are Ma'am .

THE WOMAN

So - you dont even know where they are ! How are you going to make them for tomorrow if you dont know where they are ?

HENRY

I'll find them today. I promise to turn the whole place upside down. I -

THE WOMAN

Can anyone beat that ? Listen ! Here in front of your mother I'm telling it to you. I'll wait but this once . I'll be here tomorrow four o'clock promptly. And if you dont have them by then, why - !

MRS. MASON

It'll be allright It'll be allright.

(Exit THE WOMAN ~~without a good-bye~~, slamming the door.)

HENRY

Mother - I know you are angry with me But I ran out just for one minute. The books were overdue. Are you angry ?

MRS. MASON.

Angry ? No I'm not angry. I cant afford to be angry. A poor old widow cant afford bein' angry -

HENRY

Mother ! Dont

MRS. MASON

One nice morning you might get up and out, and vanish to the four corners of the earth. You're tired of supporting your mother and your sister. (Wipes her eyes.)

HENRY

For God's sake mother, I didnt mean it ! I'll never do it again. I swear. I just happened to run out for a while. I'll make it up in the evening.

MRS. MASON

I dont say anything, but to leave a place of business in the middle of the day.

HENRY

(Sits down to work diligently)
I swear I'll make it up ! I couldnt leave this place during the evening when its not busy, could I ? Besides it was only for a few minutes. The library is near by -

MRS. MASON

'The library' - You know it isnt the library ! Its ~~that scribbling.~~ Those darn writings of yours that you keep sending out and getting back again ! You think you can hide it from me ? Fool me ?

HENRY

No no no ! I tell you no !

MRS. MASON

"No " - You know you're lying ! You know you've been doing it ever since you left high school ~~etc.~~ You know -

HENRY

Mother - !

MRS. MASON

I can see this business goin' to rack and ruin. This business that cost your father thirty years of hard toil. An' me not havin ' a pillow to lay my head on, in my old age - an ' your own sister - -

HENRY

Mother! it isnt as bad as all that, is it ? I'll make it up. I swear I will. And as for Sophie - I wish I were in her boots. Attending college with all those fine men and women for friends. Soon she'll get her B. A. degree. Isnt she out to a matinee even now?

MRS. MASON

Yes, but where is she goin' to land , if you keep on loosin' one customer after another. This putting 'em off all the time -

HENRY

Mother dear, darling mamma - would you oblige me - you havent given me

my clean towel and handkerchief today - would you mind ?

MRS. MASON
(With a sigh)
I suppose that's the only thing I'm good for - but I tell you - I'll die before my time - because I -

HENRY
Mother - I beg you. Do me the favour. You can talk on after. The towel and handkerchief

MRS. MASON.
The towel and handkerchief ! Supposing you miss them for once ! My laundry bills have been running up lately .
(Exit into back -room.)

As soon as the door closes HENRY takes out a big envelop from his west-pocket and tossing it for a while flings it on the table. As Mrs. Mason's steps are again audible he puts it hastily into one of the books. Resumes his work.

MRS. MASON
(Reentering, brings a clean towel and handkerchief . She puts the towel on one of the hinges of the back-room door, and the handkerchief on the table.)
Here they are -My laundry bills have been running up lately .

HENRY
I hope it isnt on account of my handkerchief and--

MRS. MASON
Well Sophie is a college girl. She has to have her things laudered. I cant deny her everything.

HENRY
What do you mean"everything" ?

MRS. MASON
I mean its bad enough she has to stay single. Other girls at her age are enjoying married life - are mothers -

HENRY
How about me, am I not four years older than Sophie ? -

MRS. MASON
But you are a man ! A man is a different thing from a woman. She will have a husband who will make a living for her, whereas you will have to shoulder the burden yourself.

HENRY
How about me now, am I not shouldering a burden of -

MRS. MASON
Yes, but this is your own mother and sister -

HENRY
(Taking up the handkerchief)
Mother - this handkerchief has a stain, I'm not going to use it.

MRS. MASON
A stain ? Where ? There is no stain.

HENRY
(Unfolding the handkerchief on which there is an ink-spot visible.)
You can see it for yourself. Its ink.

MRS. MASON
You call this a stain ? Why - its from the laundry- mark.

HENRY
Allright. But its a stain just the same.

MRS. MASON
I wish to God you were less particular. And dont you tell me its your nature. One ought to be boss over one's own nature. Yes sir ! with your laundry, and pay more attention to your clothes. I say , clothes are a thing everybody can see. The devil take the hindmost !

HENRY
I prefer the contrary.

MRS. MASON
Yes sir ! The devil take the hindmost. And dont you again tell me its your nature. One ought to be boss over one's own nature !

HENRY
Would you mind changing it for me ?

MRS. MASON
Oh bother, I have no time, the pudding must be burned to a cinder. (Ascends the steps hurriedly.)

HENRY heaves a sigh of relief. About to open one of the books and desists, as a ring of the entrance-door is heard.

(Enter TOM COOLEY main door. He is a man of

over thirty. Studied *carelessness* in manner. He carries a new canvas. As he advances toward the table he puts his fore-finger to his hat in token of greeting.

TOM

Well, how's tricks ?

HENRY

So so.

TOM

Any news ? I see you're smiling knowingly -

HENRY

Not that I know. (Pause) You wouldnt believe it, but there were three people asking about your painting in the window -

TOM

No, really !

HENRY

One was so stuck on it, that it almost looked, as if he were going to buy it .

TOM

Nonsense . Those photographically inclined customers of yours will never understand a painting like that. Why then am I putting it out in your window, you'll ask - and right you are ; but believe me it isnt I doing it - its my ancestor the pig, that makes me cast pearls before swine.

HENRY

And I tell you, that one of these days, a swine may be talked into picking your pearl.

TOM

In other words, I may borrow another couppie of bucks on account of these prospects ?

HENRY

You certainly may.

TOM

But who would lend me ?

HENRY

Thats the question .

TOM

Listen, dont beat about the bush . You know I mean you -

HENRY

I know .

TOM

If you know, why do you make it so hard for me ?

HENRY

I'm sorry old chap, but this time I must refuse .

TOM

Always there must be those preliminaries ! Why must you be a piker ? Cant you for once put away that soul of a huckster,? why cant you be broad , lavish ?

HENRY

Believe me, its hard to be lavish with one's own money .

TOM

Now dont grow sarcastic . I say, you're not in earnest ?

HENRY

Sorry, but I mean it. I neednt repeat to you for the hundredth time, that I owe an account of every cent I take in.

TOM

How did you manage on previous occasions ?

HENRY

Lying hard .

TOM

So you'll lie once more . Really its disgusting the way your family gets the better of you. Man, have you no self-respect whatever ?

HENRY

From y o u r manner one would think, you're of the family too -

TOM

Come now . You dont mean you are going to refuse me that shabby twenty

five dollars ?

HENRY
Twenty five ? Fifteen dollars is all I took in since yesterday .

TOM
Fifteen dollars ! Oh stop haggling !

HENRY
(Opening the cash-box)
Here, see for yourself .

TOM
How am I sure you put in a l l the receipts ?

HENRY
You can make an investigation -
(Holding up his hands.)
Here, search me !

TOM
I wonder what makes you so sarcastic today ? Say, how on earth am I going to pay my rent ? Its not luxury I'm asking of you, simply every day necessities. Only a roof over my head.

HENRY
Ten dollars is the best I can do
(Holds up a ten dollar bill.)

TOM
You're not joking ? What the devil am I going to do with ten dollars ?

HENRY
Then you can wait until next week. Very likely I'll be able to give you the money.

TOM
(Taking the bill)
Allright , you'll give me therrest next week.
(Pocketing the bill)
Really, this place is going from bad to worse. Why the deuce dont you move to a more lively neighborhood ? I'll sell this shanty and -

HENRY
Now now now - it isnt as bad as all that, is it ?

TOM

You are a poor business-man, your mother is right.

HENRY

But you pride yourself on being a poor business-man.

TOM

Yes, but I am an artist. A quality which is vitally necessary here, would be entirely out of place in my case.

HENRY

"Which is vitally necessary here"! (Laugh) Vitally necessary - for us, the manure , to fertilize, that genius may come forth , eh ?

TOM

Oh, pardon me ! I all forgot. You consider yourself as being in the game too-

HENRY

Not in your game, at any rate.

TOM

You're out of sorts today.

HENRY

Am I ? You are a very poor psychologist let me tell you. I am in the very best of moods today. That's why I could stand your insolence after a portion of mothering. And old chap, I do feel tempted to tell you -

TOM

You're not in love, are you ?

HENRY

Why not ?

TOM

You havent told me anything about it when I was here last.

HENRY

There was nothing to tell.

TOM

You mean its that sudden, gosh !

HENRY

Sit down on that little box, there, and any time my mother shows up try to talk business. I intend keeping it a secret as long as I can.

TOM

Very romantic ! Here I am , shoot.
(Sits down on a soap-box)

HENRY

I I'd rather not tell you .

TOM

(Getting up, makes a movement ~~as if~~ to go.)
Suit yourself, suit yourself.

HENRY

Are you certain, you're in a mood to listen to a thing like that ? You know I hate your being vulgar in a case like this .

TOM

(Laughs)
Didnt I know it ! You're more eager to tell , than I to listen -
(Sits down again.)
Start with the story, no introductions.

HENRY

Last week - a girl came in -

TOM

Yes ?

HENRY

She brought two pictures of her mother's.

TOM

To have them framed .

HENRY

Yes . She wanted them done the same day . I promised . But she looked into my eyes and - saw the lie . And---then it was that I tasted of her strong will, of her powerful personality . You wouldnt believe it, but she made me keep my word .

TOM

You fell in love with her .

HENRY

Dont be so abrupt -

TOM

But I guessed rightly this time ! Knowing the kind of saint you are I didnt even ask whether she be a -

HENRY
(interrupting him impatiently.)
Now now now .

TOM
Go ahead, I suppose I'm doomed to listen to preliminaries.

HENRY
I think that the preliminaries here, are almost as interesting as the story itself. Do you see this painting of Christ ? I happened to take it down that morning to put a new coat of varnish on the frame -

TOM
So what has this - ?

HENRY
Wait ! I'd rather not tell you -

TOM
Come on !

HENRY
You are too impatient .

TOM
Because you made me curious !

HENRY
Well well, to cut a long story short - she kept looking at the painting and at me, and she insists - I'm Jesus...

TOM
(Disappointed)
Is that all ?

HENRY
(Vexed) Is that all ?! You know that a certain ~~perceptive~~ power of perception is necessary. ~~Any common mortal~~ Intelligence -

TOM
Intelligence nothing. Everyone looking at you and the painting can see it. Particularly with this goatee of yours, that you insist on growing lately - How many times did I tell you ~~that~~ you'd make a good Christ ?

HENRY
But you are an artist . How many girls come in without even noticing -
I tell you she's ~~no - no intelligent~~ !

TOM

Well well well - ?

HENRY

She was in twice since and -

TOM

And ? -

HENRY

She promised to be here today. As a matter of fact she is due here any moment -

TOM

I suppose you want to be left alone ? I'll clear the fields.

HENRY

You can come in later and have a look at her .

TOM

Did you kiss her yet ?

HENRY

I ---

TOM

You ?

(A NEGRO enters main door.)

NEGRO

Hello, ready ?

HENRY

I'm working on them .

NEGRO

But you promised for four 'clock this afternoon ?

TOM

So long !

HENRY

Wait !

TOM

I'll be back in a minute, I'm going to fetch some crayons.

(Exit.)

HENRY

(To the Negro),
You'd oblige me very much, if you'd come tomorrow .

NEGRO

But you promised for -

HENRY

God promised us joy, and given us pain .

NEGRO

Dont know 'bout G o d promisin' me anything, but what I know is - that you -

HENR

For that, I'll make a good job .

NEGRO

I promised the girl the picture for tonight, an' I'll be damned if I know what t'do .
(Looking closely at the picture Henry is working on.)
Is this myself ?

HENRY

No this is a baby .

NEGRO

A baby ? - But you said you're workin' on my picture ! Aint you ?

HENR Y

Yes , no, yes.

NEGRO

See here - I'M gone wait oveh there - 'cross the street - in the Almighty Church Delicatessen and Lunch- room till you 'ready, see ?
(Reenter TOM)

HENRY

I think it'll be better for you if you give me more time and come tomorrow.

NEGRO

Now see -

HENRY

Yes yes yes. I know what you want to say. But I also know that you are a gentleman.

NEGRO

You bet I am -

HENRY

And you wont quarrel.

NEGRO

Done' know 'bout that - well anyhow, this is your last chance !
(Exit in half threatening attitude.)

TOM

Why the devil do you promise everybody for tomorrow ?

HENRY

They wont leave their work otherwise. They its impossible, yet they insist on being fooled. Besides those that get their work done in time never call for it.

TOM

And I tell you, you'll ruin the place. And its a pity after all, because it is profitable in a small way, and under more efficient management could be made to yield even more.
(Takes up the upper book from the table, the envelop falling out , he picks it up and reads :)
" The Poor Man's Magasine "- so. And back to Mr. Mason per General Delivery-

HENRY

(Taking away the envelop.)
That isnt fair.

TOM

There, there, keep your privacy. You're still childish enough to imagine its a secret -

HENRY

This isnt.

TOM

And what is ? Is there anything else , I dont know of ? (Pointing at trunk) In there ?

HENRY

You remind me of a child I once saw crush a whole group of dandelions. On looking back , it perceived that one was left untouched, so it went back a big stretch and squashed it on the stem - butI tell you, there are really more kingdoms in heaven --

TOM

I know you are a prophet in disguise, and your great message is under way.

And some day you'll hurl it among us, and overwhelm us.

HENRY
I will never overwhelm vulgarity, nor - cynicism.

TOM
That something is brewing, I can well see. The question is - will I be one of the happy few to be initiated into that something , before it sees the light of day, or am I not worthy ?

HENRY
You said so.

TOM
Say, I'd like to see your goddess.

HENRY
(Places a finger on his lips.)
Seh. - There is one thing however I did not -

TOM
Yes - ?

HENRY
I -

TOM
Say, whats all this stammering for ?

HENRY
I mean - I dont think she noticed anything about my - infirmity.

TOM
I see.

HENRY
Here , in this place, things are so arranged, that its hard to -

TOM
And I should think you're not in a hurry to rearrange it.

HENRY
You neednt think, I mean to take advantage.

TOM
Oh no - but if advantage takes you -

HENRY

Yes, I do admit, I dont like to expose myself to the stare of strangers. There every step in one's life is a dissonance - and why ? because it pleased destiny to send me out on a certain slippery night.

TOM

Dont get a fit of self-commiseration. So. Do you actually think of marriage, children ?

HENRY

And why not ? A child is a great thing. He is your own. To everybody else you are a misfit, a superfluous thing, but to him. You are his God. You gave him life , brains, motion. No matter that he'll come to despise you in later life: but that immensly long period until he grows up. In his presence alone you can limp about freely. Even with a certain amount of satisfaction. Its useful. Its necessary. This very limping. Your eye when it meets his, does not have to drop. Its challenging. He can not unmake himself. He w o u l d not unmake himself. And then he develops a philosophy to reconcile himself to the inevitable. He begins to look for good qualities in you, to justify that conceited opinion, that exaggeration of his own value. Finally he is brought by this very human process to look up to you, his creator, to whom he owes life, with thanks.

TOM

Shucks ! Your lackadaisical outpourings wont make m e fall on my knees to this " marvelous feat of creating life. A new worm !

HENRY

A worm has a wonderful mechanism ; and great intellectual efforts are necessary to grasp and marvel at it. And so I say : Mr. Worm - hail !

TOM

Suit yourself, suit yourself. But you a r e talkative today. I'd like to see the cause of all this.

HENRY

Drop in in about fifteen minutes.

TOM

In other words you're giving me the G.B. Allright. I'm glad I didnt find your mother here, I know she dont like me.

HENRY

How about my sister ?

TOM

She's too practical. Of course, as a makeweight with another suitor - I'm not to be despised.

(Both laugh. Exit TOM.

HENRY works on but soon as if struck by a sudden thought gets up burriedly, unlocks the trunk, takes out a manuscript and writes something into it with his fountain-pen. Puts it back casting nervous glances at back doors. As he is about to lock the trunk the bell from the entrance-door is heard]

SOPHIE

(Rushes in, she is twenty six, goodlooking, brusque.)
You dont have to be afraid. I wont tell mother.

HENRY

There is nothing to tell.

SOPHIE

Oh yes, there is. I know , you have been writing again.
I tell you, he was wonderful ! You should have heard him. When it came to this -
(Sings stanza) of „Ase's Death"
Ilnearly died. I clenched my fists so - here, you can still see the red marks from my finger-nails. Some conductor !

HENRY

You always"nearly" die -

SOPHIE

Go to the devil !

HENRY laughs.

SOPHIE

No wonder you're so dull. You never see nor hear anything ! Always burried in this den !

HENRY

If I were not burried in this den, where would you get the money to go to matinees ?

SOPHIE

There you are ! Always he winds up with that ! Begrudging everybody the little bit of pleasure ! I pity the wife, that'll get you !

HENRY

You can never tell -

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

SOPHIE
So you intend making a model husband, do you ? Its only your mother and your sister that get the worst of you !

HENRY
Now dont make a scene . (Coaxing.) After all you're my only l i t t l e sister -

SOPHIE
I wouldnt make a scene if you paid me for it . I am not in the mood . (Sings.) He was simply w nderful ! Zashenka darling ! Isnt his Russian name cute ? I could just give him a hug !

HENRY
Say, I think Tom is falling in love with you -

SOPHIE
And what if he is ? And why are you telling it to me ? You know a man like Tom hasnt a ghost of a chance with me -

HENRY
And why, pray ? I dont see anything wrong with h i m - the only set - back to my notion is - the man wont marry .

SOPHIE
Is that so ?! Now dont be so sure !

HENRY
If you can hook h i m why - I'll give you credit . Both, as an

intellectual, and a pretty woman .

SOPHIE

I don't see it worth my while !

HENRY

I see, the grapes are too sour -

SOPHIE

DoOyou realize that you behave very disrespectfully towards me ? Everyone treats me as ~~[illegible]~~ a Co-Ed, with consideration but you -

HENRY

But dont forget, that even so, I have an indirect share in it. You buy consideratiOnwith my earnings - and little sister - I dont begrudge it you-

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

so easily, if I were not mindful of your condition !

HENRY

(Jumps up)
Hold your tongue,will you ? !

SOPHIE

Look at him, look at him - I'm not afraid of you, and you dont have to show its a sore spot with you!

HENRY

Hold your tongue ! Shut up I tell you !

SOPHIE

And if I refuse ? What are you going ot do about it ?

HENRY

(Beside himself with anger)
I - !

SOPHIE

(Puts out her tongue at him)
You you you !
(Runs upstairs)

(HENRY sits down again to work, soon his anger subsides to such an extent , that he begins to look expectantly at the door. The bell rings, he rushes towards door. An advertisement is thrown in. He sts again down to work. Later another ring is heard, to which he responds only with an anger glance.)

FLORENCE enters. She is twenty five, handsome , reddish hair,nervous - disposition. To Henry's " One second please " she smiles, and proceeds on tiptoe towards the interior. HENRY gets up embarrassed. They contemplate each other.

HENRY

You ---

FLORENCE

(Embracing him violently)
My Jesus ! My Savior !

HENRY

You are so - impetuous.....

FLORENCE

There is no one around, is there ?

HENRY

No . [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

FLORENCE

Wasn't it queer , the way we became acquainted ?

HENRY

Its because of your forwardness , your persistence .

FLORENCE

And your laziness .
(Both laugh)
As soon as I saw that woman disappointed, I knew what kind of bird you were !

HENRY

I didnt disappoint my little girl though ?

FLORENCE

I w o u l d n t be disappointed !

HENRY

You're sure that "two o'clock train stuff worked with me ? That going out of town business ?

FLORENCE

You did believe it in the beginning .

HENRY

But do you remember what I said when two o'clock came, and you were still in my place ?

FLORENCE

You said :" Miss , its two o'clock, you'll miss the train " - Ha ha ha ! That w a s funny . You made the pictures though !

HENRY

Its because i wanted to oblige you.

FLORENCE

I think you were a little afraid of me . Own up now -

HENRY

Do you like it better that way ?

FLORENCE

One thing I liked in you very very much . Do you remember the man, the poor man? [illegible]
(HENRY nods.)
I asked you why you refused to give him anything, and you said its because I was there. I shouldnt think you would to set yourself off in my eyes. Thats wery clever . [illegible] My Jesus !
My own Jesus !
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

FLORENCE

Do you know - I am a little afraid of your mother . She does not take kindly to me .

HENRY

But she saw you only once-

FLORENCE

I didnt like that look she gave me .

HENRY

Oh no . I'm sure you dont know my mother, she'll like you very much

I'm sure.

FLORENCE

You little liar, you know, you're not sure !

HENRY

You are calling me names already.

FLORENCE

Yes, I am calling you names. Say, what happened to your last story . any news ?

HENRY

Came back, as usual.

FLORENCE

Oh - !

HENRY

I am already used to it, and absolutely indifferent. I continue sending them out of habit. Its a kind of tribute I pay to a stifled desire, a cheap craving for publicity. But as is the case with things exacted, you cheat your master. This stuff - a deliberate choice of by-paths and tossing carelessly picayune experiences looked upon and treated from one corner of the eye, as it were. Taking heed not to encroach upon forbidden territory. Upon the main road of concentrated intensity of effort--

FLORENCE

You mean you put all in that big thing ?

HENRY

"The big thing " ! I like to hear you call it so. Yes, I put all in the big thing. That is I make assortments. Things of kindred size and shape go together. As soon as a thing begins to soar aloft, in it goes - thereinto that caldron that you call the big thing. Do you understand what I am talking about ?

FLORENCE

I do.

HENRY

Of course, you'll say its unjust. But in comparison to what they publish in the current magazines -

FLORENCE

The other day I red a story -

HENRY

In the beginning it was different. I had burned away all my energy on a thing , and then it came back. Although I knew it was sent back unread , yet, looking into the returned manuscript it hurt. It seemed as if though each word had been smitten on the cheek, scoffed at. And each word would

look back at you with reproach, ~~[illegible]~~, because soiled in some gutter of somebody's cynicism---

FLORENCE

But how about the big thing ? Are you going to keep it always a secret? May I not --?

HENRY

Meanwhile yes. One mustnt look at a half-formed child. But when it is full-grown, fledged- When it will have acquired the bloom of perfection, then -

FLORENCE

Then you'll be the greatest man living !
(Nestles closer to him)
But I ? Where will I ?-----

HENRY

You ? You'll be my -
(Chenks himself)

FLORENCE

Youfre frightening me ! You're not a married man ?!

HENRY

No. But I -

(A ring of the bell makes them both start. Florence receding to a respectable distance.)

MRS. RAY enters. She is a middleaged stockily built woman.

MRS. RAY

(After closing door looks around. Seeing nobody she calls into the interior.)
Hello, there !

FLORENCE

(Hastily)
This is mother's voice. I forgot to tell you. She wants to know you. Be nice to her.

HENRY

You bet I will .
(Goes to entrance, Florence following.

FLORENCE

There she is - Mamma !
(Introducing)
This is my mother - Mr. Mason !
(Both bow with a "pleased to meet you ")

MRS. RAY

My daughter told me about a certain picture you have for sale - I'd like to see it .

HENRY

A picture ? There are many -

FLORENCE

Its the one of the prince and shepherdess .

HENRY

Oh yes, I remember .

MRS. RAY

Would you mind showing it to me ?

HENRY

Why - its right here .
(Points to one of the pictures on the wall.)
But to tell you the truth Madam , as far as artistic value goes - I should advise -

MRS. RAY

(Lost in admiration)
Isnt that just wonderful !

Henry HENRY

(About to say something checks himself with a)
Hem -

MRS. RAY

What would you charge me for a picture like that ?

HENRY

Not much .

FLORENCE

(Threatening with a finger)
No favours Mr. Mason .....

HENRY

It'll be allright .

MR. MASON

(Coming down the stairs.)
Henry ! I think you ought to -
(Sees the women and drawn back a step.))

HENRY

(Takes her aside, while the two women turn to the window in conversation)
Mother - be so kind - I have customers now - they might make an important purchase-

MRS.. MASON

Allright i'll go upstairs . I know you are ashamed of your mother .

HENRY

Mamma ...how can you say a thing like that ? I only beg you now - it might interfere -

MRS. MASON

Allright -
(Ascends the stairs)

MRS. RAY

I guess this is your mother ?

HENRY

Yes Ma'a .

MRS. RAY

Does she live upstaire ?

HENRY

Yes Ma'am, we occupy the upper part of the house.

MRS. RAY

I understand this is your own property ?
(Florence gives her a secret nudge)

HENRY

Yes Ma'am .

MRS. RAY

Isnt there any space down here ?

HENRY

Yes , there is . We have a large back-room here. I'm using it as a stock - room.

MRS. RAY

What waste ! Your mother should be made to live in that back-room, and then you could rent out the upper floor ,See ?
(Florence gives her another nudge)

HENRY

It wouldnt be convenient.

MRS. RAY

But it would be profitable .

TOM

(Enters main door.)
I did my best to -
(Sees the women, and retreats apologetically)
I beg your pardon !

HENRY

This is my friend Mr. Tom Cooley, the artist of the picture exhibited in the window - And this is Mrs and Miss Ray .
(All bow with a "Pleased ")

MRS. RAY

Why - do you have a picture in the window ? I didnt notice it -

TOM

A fine compliment indeed !

FLORENCE

You mustnt mind - Mother doesnt intend to criticize you . She really didnt notice the picture .

TOM

So much the worse .-

FLORENCE

For that I'm going to repay you by having a good look at it myself. To tell you the truth - I too didnt notice it .
(Goes to window, Tom following her. There he takes out a canvas on which is painted a landscape. Florence admires it. They remain there talking quietly.)

MRS. RAY

(Looking across the stage.)
How much more or loss is this business worth ?

HENRY

Oh , its really hard to tell . I have abig stock laid up for yourn .

MRS. RAY

More or less ?

HENRY

I should judge about - it really is hard to tell. I never thought of selling it, thats why I never appraised it . And besides it might be worth more to me, than to anyone else.;

MRS. RAY

But you surely must know the value of this here property ?

HENRY

About ten thousand .

MRS. RAY

Are there any mortgages ?

HENRY

The first of course.

(Enter ELDERLY GENTLEMAN with a package.)

HENRY

(Mountaintop)
Yes Sir ?

GENTLEMAN

I'd like to have these pictures framed . what will (you) charge me for the two of them ?

HENRY

It depends - What kind of moulding would you like ?

GENTLEMAN

Oh plain things . Something like this here.
(Points to a frame)

HENRY

This is brown oak, do you want mats?

GENTLEMAN

Yes mats . Two inches wide . Grey.

HENRY

That'll be one dollar fifty cents per piece .

GENTLEMAN

Allright, but i must have them for tomorrow .

HENRY

Tomorrow ?-

GENTLEMAN

If you cant promise, I'd rather not leave them . I'm going out of town.

HENRY

Allright then - tomorrow four o'clock .

GENTLEMAN

Allright . Tomorrow four o'clock . Promptly .

HENRY

Yes Sir, I'll start working on them immediately .

GENTLEMAN

Good bye !

HENRY

Good bye !

(Exit GENTLEMAN . HENRY puts away the package in some remote corner.)

MRS. RAY
I thought you were going to work on them !

HENRY
So I am - but I prefer serving you first Madam -

MRS. RAY
I see . Thank you. Do you know, a dollar fifty cents per piece is entirely too little .

HENRY
Do you think so ? I asked fifty cents more . I always do . They bargain.

MRS. RAY
Oh oh oh . I suppose you know your business best .

HENRY
I suppose so.

MRS. RAY
Floss -

FLORENCE
Here I am !

MRS. RAY
(Approaching her)
I'll be going now . I like this picture , and you make it out between yourselves about the prize . Good bye Mr. Mason , I hope to see you as our guest soon, very soon . Good bye, Mr. what is your name . You are drawing a weekly salary here I understand ?

TOM
In a way yes .

HENRY
Mr. Cooley is a free-hand artist .

MRS. RAY
Free hand ? You mean he makes his pictures free of charge ?

HENRY
Not exactly,

- FLORENCE
I'll explain it to you later home, bye-bye mamma -
(Kisses her mouth and so prevents another question from being uttered of which however the syllable "lie " escapes .)

MRS. RAY
So good bye everybody . I am very very pleased to have met you . Mr Mason you can take your man (Pointing at TOM) sometimes up our house too.
(To TOM condescendingly)
You'll be welcome . Goodbye, Goodbye everybody.
(All answer goodbye . Exit Mrs. Ray.)

FLORENCE
(Remembering afterwards)
Mother ! I forgot to tell you something ! Gentlemen, I'll be back in a second !
(Rushes out)

HENRY
How do you like her ?

TOM
Whom, the mother or the daughter ?

HENRY
The daughter of course you silly -

TOM
Pop --

HENRY
Is this the best you can do ?

TOM
Meanwhile .

FLORENCE
(Re enters)
Here I am gentlemen . Just in time to stop your gossip .

TOM
I'LL be going .

FLORENCE
Whats your hurry ?

HENRY

(Sits down to work)
Go ahead folks, enjoy yourselves .

TOM

How about yourself ?

HENRY

I am swamped with work .

(Steps descending the back-stair are audible . Everybody pauses to listen. HENRY casting a disturbed look thither, exchanges glances with TOM , who drops his eyes in token of understanding.)

TOM

I say Mason, isnt there a reproduction of Rubens ' Bacchanal in your back-room ?

HENRY

Yes -

(To Florence) TOM
I just want to show you something . In connection with my opinion about the old masters. Are you interested ?
(Goes towards back-room)

FLORENCE

Certainly -
(Follows him, both go into back-room closing the door .

MRS. MASON

(Enters)
Well, have they bought -
(HENRY places a finger on his lips , Mrs. Mason interrupted , cranes her neck to find out the cause of it . Seeing nothing, she continues.)
Why, whats the matter ? Anyone in ?

HENRY

No . But why should you talk so loud ? The watch- maker next door can hear every word.

MRS. MASON

But we also can hear every word the watch-maker says - Didnt I myself hear him say to his wife :" Damn you " ?

HENRY

(With an uneasy look towards back-room door)
Sh -!

MRS. MASON
For all I care ! Listen , it seems to me I saw that girl here before -

HENRY
Please mother, I beg you not to talk too loud .

MRS. MASON
(A little quieter)
I could swear, I saw that girl here once before -

HENRY
(Feigning indifference)
May be you did . No wonder, she is a steady customer of mine .

MRS. MASON
A steady customer ?

HENRY
Why - yer .

MRS. MASON
Why should a girl be a steady customer , is she in business for herself?

HENRY
Why, no . Of course not , but -

MRS. MASON
You're hiding somethin' from your mother ! This girl - I dont like this girl hanging 'round here .

HENRY
(With a hasty disturbed look towards door)
Sah - the watchmaker !

MRS. MASON
Watchmaker go hang ! I say I dont like this girl hanging 'round - Why should a girl hang aroun' a place like this ? If she's worth her salt she can get herself a regular fellow -

HENRY
(Getting up excitedly)
Mother ! Why did you say that ? !

MRS. MASON
Because its the truth . Believe me it hurts me to think about it, but

you must be prevented from putting foolish notions into your head.

HENRY

~~[illegible]~~
The truth ! The truth ! I dont want your truth ! ~~[illegible]~~ ! --

MRS. MASON

So I am right after all ?

SOPHIE

~~(Closes main door)~~ comes down the stairs.
~~While I was yet in the house I was sure I had forgotten something I~~ -
Whats the matter ? Whats the matter ?

MRS. MASON

Oh nothing !

SOPHIE

Do,do tell me Henry !

HENRY

Nothing that could interest you -

SOPHIE

You're lying ! I can see you're excited, and mamma's excited, oh, come on!

MRS. MASON

(To Sophie)
So you 're going to stay home tonight ?

SOPHIE

Of course not ! ~~[illegible]~~ we're having a party tonight . ~~[illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~
(To HENRY)
So you wont tell me ? Go tho the devil little brother ! I'll oblige you with a similar good turn. Ma. I'm going to get dressed !
(Rushes up the stairs.)

MRS. MASON

Have at least a bite before you go ! ~~[illegible]~~
(Exit)

HENRY goes hurriedly to back-door, knocks . The door ~~[illegible]~~ opens. FLORENCE and TOM appear.)

HENRY
Er - pardon me if I interrupted you- I want you to meet my mother and er - sister .

TOM
You dont have to apologize . We just intended coming out ourselves.

FLORENCE
Indeed we did ! You came just in time .

HENRY
Did Mr. Cooley tell you a lot of interesting things ?

FLORENCE
You bet ! ~~[illegible]~~ Now I know all about Futurism , Cubism Dadaism—

SOPHIE
(Rushing down back-stair Mrs. Mason following)
I tell you , I have no time !

MRS. MASON
You'll starve yourself to death, remember .Since morning you didn't have a -

HENRY
Mother, Sophie ! Come here please ! (Both comply) I want to introduce you - This is Miss Ray, Miss Florence Ray - and this , my mother and my sister, Mrs. and Miss Mason.

FLORENCE
(Responds very eagerly to the other's rather cold " I am delighted ")
I am very glad to know you !

MRS. MASON
I think I saw you here before, darle - Was that woman your mother? (Florence nods) What is your father doing?

FLORENCE
My father is dead.
~~[illegible]~~ (Embarrassing silence . ~~[illegible]~~

MRS. MASON
~~[illegible]~~ Do you have any sisters brothers? (Henry motions to her not to) to keep quiet.

FLORENCE
~~[illegible]~~ One brother in the army—

MRS. MASON

~~(Interrupting her)~~ What does your mother live on? Any property? ~~To quote the Book - do you ever read the Book dearie? It says: "Idleness is mother of all iniquities". Good bye dearie!~~ ~~(Ascends the stairs.)~~ May I ask what you are doing? (Henry motions her again) If you dont mind -

Certainly not! We have our own ~~Florence~~ I'm a book keeper.

I guess I'll be going - TOM

~~(Mrs. Mason exit with polish, etc. Henry)~~ ~~Laughs again and turns to right. She wants dance there says. Well~~ Well Ladies, so long! (Bows to Florence) I'm glad to have met you!

Well, I'll be going too. Good ~~bye~~ Mrs. Mason dearie! (Goes up the stairs)

SOPHIE

(To Tom taking his arm and bowing slightly to Florence)
Take me with you!

TOM

With pleasure!
(Both exeunt main door. ~~Tom carrying his valise.~~)

FLORENCE

Your sister dont like me. She hardly looked at me -

HENRY

My sister? Oh, you mustnt mind h e r -

FLORENCE

Neither does your mother -

HENRY

You mustnt mind darling, as long as I like you -

FLORENCE

What is it you wanted to say - when we were interrupted by my mother? -

HENRY

I ~~ai~~

FLORENCE

~~(Henry impatiently)~~
Well? -

HENRY

Wait a minute - ~~and~~ - look at me ~~-/-~~ and ~~-~~ follow me ~~-/-~~
(He walks down the whole length of the store without stopping and limping perceptibly)

FLORENCE.
(Following him . ~~Impetuously~~ .
What's the matter with your foot ?

HENRY stops, turns round . ~~Suddenly sees their reflection~~
~~in the mirror. Pause.~~

FLORENCE.
Whats the matter with your - (Checks herself with an enlightened)
Oh - !
(Pause)

HENRY
Now - you know .

FLORENCE
Why didnt you tell me before ?

HENRY
There was no occasion. Besides it isnt too late yet . -

FLORENCE
It is too late - - I --

HENRY
Y ou - ?
(With emotion)
In spite of-------?
~~(Embraces her)~~

FLORENCE
~~(Struggles between them)~~
Let me think a moment !
(Covers her face)
Oh - !

~~Struggles between them~~

~~Struggles between them~~

~~Struggles between them~~ -

~~Struggles between them~~

HENRY

Are you angry ?

FLORENCE

Angry - ? I'm not angry . Only to my notion , you ought to have told me about it before -

HENRY

I was afraid of losing you -

FLORENCE

So you s i d want to take advantage !

HENRY

Its in your hand to punish me -

[illegible] .

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

FLORENCE rests her head on his shoulder. HENRY closes his eyes in mute rapture .)

HENRY

And now it is for you to ask m e to --

FLORENCE

To marry you [illegible] --

HENRY

Yes !

(Steps are heard descending the stair. Both get apart.)

MRS. MASON

(Enters.)

Is the woman's picture done ye You know the woman who wanted to take them back ?

HENRY
They will be ready in time, dont worry mother -

MRS. MASON
Excuse me, I thought you were gone dearie - old eyes arent young eyes. Its no trifle to be old . My bones just ache me so -

FLORENCE
I could swear Mrs. Mason You're your son's sister, you look so young -

HENRY
Havent I a pretty little mother ?

MRS. MASON
Handsome is, as handsome does . I am dead tired . Housework is never done dearie .

FLORENCE
Does not your daughter help you out a bit ?

MRS. MASON
My Sophie is a [redacted]. She is not an idle loafer
(Turns away sulkily , and up the stairs)

FLORENCE
And your future wife will have to bear all this ?

HENRY
Oh no, I'll take her away to some far off place -

FLORENCE
You mean it ?
(With forced gaiety)
Hen...I' like to ask you a little question - concerning a little matter - that happened to a friend of mine. It just entered my mind. It reminds me - ha ha - queer thing - I dont know why it should have entered my mind just now -

HENRY
Lets not talk about your friends now -

FLORENCE
Half a moment . Its important . Say, what would you do in a case like

that ? Imagine for a moment . Imagine yourself in his place
- It striked me as funny, because it happened just on such a very occasion -

HENRY

But what ?

FLORENCE

What ?! - You men are so direct... You ought to consider that I am a woman, and that there are certain things, which arennot fit to be mentioned in such a direct manner.... You know , that friend of mine... had asked a girl to marry him... but.... after she had made a certain confession - he refused her .....

HENRY

Florence !.....!

FLORENCE

So you see.....

HENRY

FLORENCE

Have you..? Are you.....? Why did you tell it to me ?

FLORENCE

Would you be deceived ?

HENRY

I would .

FLORENCE

Why should I be conscious-stricken all my life for having deceived you ? As it is, I feel relieved. A burden is off my mind .

HENRY

A burden is off you mind - Even though that burden might crush somebody else.....I see . One can afford to tell the truth to a cripple .....

FLORENCE

Now I suppose the only thing to do, is - to say „good-bye".

HENRY

Good -bye "?

FLORENCE

I suppose you dont want me now .

HENRY

I - not - want - you ?
(With a queer smile)
I cant afford such a luxury.....

FLORENCE

Why - what do you mean ?

HENRY

(Embraces her as if ——— afraid to hurt her, and kisses her on the forehead.)
You shall be my wife .

FLORENCE

My Savior !

HENRY

My Mary Magdalen.....

(FLORENCE kisses both his hands violently and rushes out main door. HENRY remains standing on the spot abstractedly.)

MRS. MASON

(Comes down the stairs.)
Is she gone ?

HENRY

~~(Mmmmmmmmmmy~~
Who ? -

MRS. MASON

I mean - hem - I brought you another handkerchief - I thought you wanted one - ?
(Takes out a clean handkerchief from the pocket of her apron)

HENRY

Another handkerchief ?

MRS. MASON

Yes -

(Abstractedly) HENRY
~~(unintelligible remarks)~~
Oh, it'll be allright ....This one is good enough .....One ought to be boss over one's nature ....dient you say so ?..

MRS. MARSH.
(Eagerly)
Now you're talking !2 My ~~laundry~~ bills have been running up lately, something awful. You're sure you wont change your mind ?
(Exit ~~hurriedly~~ without waiting for an answer with the new handkerchief.

HENRY goes slowly to table, picks up the stained handkerchief, unfolds it, holding it a while suspended in the air, contemplates its very visible stain, then puts it slowly in his vest-pocket .

Curtain falls.

THE SAVIOR.

THE SECOND ACT.

Six weeks later, in the sitting-room of a newly furnished apartment, Henry's and Florence' future home. A door at extreme left leads into the hall-way, another at right into a bedroom. At right center is the entrance into the dining-room. The two French windows are in the center. The furniture including a victrola is of dark wall-nut neatly upholstered. There are carpets draperies, and bric-a-brac. The only unusual thing being a desk of brown oak.

As the curtain goes up "Ase's Death" played by an orchestra is heard from the victrola. Sophie leaning on a table, listens. Florence is seen adjusting the draperies about the window curtains.

FLORENCE

For God's sake Sophie, do me the favour, and change the record.

SOPHIE

Sah - !

FLORENCE

You're repeating it for the fifteenth time. I wish you'd put on some jazz -

SOPHIE

Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Listen to this -
(Pause. Both listen until the melody is finished.)
Isn't he great ! Zaschenka darling ! Its just the way they played it in Aeolian Hall six weeks ago !
(Adjusts the record again.)

FLORENCE

What, again ? !

SOPHIE

Yes ma'am ! ~~I'll/see/if/I/can/find~~

FLORENCE

That's the limit ! Give me at least a minute's rest !

SOPHIE

Allright I'll give you a rest.
(Rummages among the records.)

FLORENCE

Sophie, I need your help. Would you mind - this desk - I want to place it here, between these two windows, so he'll have the garden.

SOPHIE

What ? Move the desk ? You're crazy. That's what you are ! I tell you

you pamper him too much. He isnt used to it. You'll spoil him, and you'll be sorry for it Miss.

FLORENCE

Never mind -

SOPHIE

A desk in a sitting-room ! Whoever heard of a thing like that ?

FLORENCE

I dont see anything wrong in that. On the contrary, this is the finest place in the house.

SOPHIE

Just because its the finest place in the house, I wouldnt put it there. And besides, I dont think he needs a desk altogether. These writings of his -

FLORENCE

Oh, please please, Sophie, if you wont help me, I'll manage the thing myself.
(Tries to move the desk.)

SOPHIE

(Gets up, and helps her.)
Dont be so touchy ! My, but the darned thing is heavy!
(They both move the desk up to the windows. Sophie goes back to her victrola. Looks for new records.

SOPHIE

Well, tomorrow, you're going to be a bride. How does it feel ?

FLORENCE

You'll find it out yourself in due time.

HENRY

(Enters from dining-room with two Japanese vases)
These two vases will have to remain here.
(Puts them on the table.Turns to Florence)
As soon as Tom brings your portrait I'm going to put it right here.
(Points to space on wall over table.)
Fine portrait. Excellent portrait. Saw it after the last sitting. Wonderful likeness. I tell you the man has talent.

SOPHIE

I wouldnt let him paint m y portrait.

HENRY

Its because you dont appreciate him.

SOPHIE

I dont.

(Changes the needle. The melody is again heard.)

FLORENCE

I - ?

(Sophie changes the needle. The record is again heard.)

HENRY

Sophie ! Oblige me ! (Goes to her and stops the needle)

SOPHIE

Dont dont ! Oh dont !

HENRY

This is impossible. My nerves are shattered ! I cant stand this wailing!

SOPHIE

You call this wailing ? Much y o u know about music ! I can see now what your future home is going to look like. Well, I'm not going to live here !

HENRY

You said it ! You are a very sensible girl, little sister , after all. And because you gave in this time, I promise to let you always have your way.

SOPHIE

Soon you'll want jazz yourself -

FLORENCE

Why not ?

HENRY

Once in a while -

SOPHIE

May be you'll want to dance too ?

HENRY

Sophie !

(Sophie fetches her hat, pocket-book and gloves and goes out excitedly slamming the door left. She drops a glove on the way, which Henry picks up and puts on the table)

FLORENCE

She's terrible ! I wont stand it ! She is a venomous snake ! Did she hurt you ?

HENRY

Oh no. I'm rather used to her ways -

FLORENCE

Poor boy - the jade ! I wont have her here !

HENRY

Little girl, you mustnt mind. Its rather hard on them - They cant put up with the idea that they are to lose a part of me. Here comes along a little girl and leads astray their provider. It would make anyone sore.

FLORENCE

But I had plenty of this up till now. Do you really think you could keep it all from me ? I knew of their carryings on. I found it out from that last big quarrel. I heard every word of it. The way they abused me- and you threatening to leave altogether -

HENRY

You heard ?

FLORENCE

I did -. I couldnt help it. The door was half open. [illegible]. And you never told me a word about it ? Your poor poor Henry little girl !- [illegible] !

Florence

I considered that you had enough to bear from them. But by God I decided to snatch you a way from their clutch ! -- [illegible].

([illegible])

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

HENRY

You're a dangerous person -

FLORENCE

I'm only sorry you have to go back there.

HENRY

Only until tomorrow ~~--this~~ is the last Saturday I'm going to live with them - And then ~~it will be only business~~. This little corner of our own.

FLORENCE

What's amiss in this room ?

HENRY

In this room ?

FLORENCE

Dont you notice anything ? How about this ?
(Pointing at desk.)

HENRY

You moved the desk ? Why ?

FLORENCE

So you'll have the garden -

HENRY

(Kisses hers hair)
Little book-keeper -

FLORENCE

I know you brought the big thing -

HENRY

You know ?

FLORENCE

I saw you put it stealthily into the dining-room closet. You thief.

HENRY

You are a thief yourself.

FLORENCE

Lets put it in -

HENRY

~~let's~~ .
(Goes into dining-room and comes back with a manuscript in a black cover.)

FLORENCE

Oh - !

HENRY

(Opens one of the drawers)
How we're going to move in. Have a little corner of our own. Until we -

FLORENCE

Do let me hold it a minute!
(HENRY gives her the manuscript. ~~Musician puzzled with interest.~~)
Its still a secret, isnt it ?

HENRY

It is.
(Takes the manuscript from her.)
And now in it goes.
(Locks the drawer)
Here, you hold the key.

FLORENCE

I'm going to string it on the band of my wrist-watch, see ?
(Does so.)

HENRY

I all forgot -

FLORENCE

What ?

HENRY

The clean sheets.

~~Florence's manner~~

~~Henry~~

~~burning his music manuscript.~~

FLORENCE

Shall I fetch some for you ?

HENRY

Oh no. I'll manage it somehow.

FLORENCE

And now a few plants, and this room will be complete.

~~Henry~~

~~Florence's manner?~~

~~Florence~~

~~Oh I'll destroy that. Florence's manner, Henry's nervous.~~
~~Henry is burning it, Florence~~
~~Florence's time. Florence's manner & Henry's~~

~~with, [illegible] myself. Under a burden of guilt -~~

~~HENRY~~

Debt --

~~FLORENCE~~

~~And brings to mind [illegible] and [illegible] I can look straight in the face without distress. I am fortunate [illegible]~~

HENRY

You said you were going to show me your dress, but you havent mentioned the veil -

FLORENCE

I told yo u already, there isnt going to be a veil--

HENRY

Why -?

FLORENCE

Because - - I am not ---worthy.

HENRY

Yes you are - And orange-blossoms and myrtle you'll have too.

FLORENCE

No I wont.

HENRY

Wont you ?
(Goes into dining-room, and brings a white basin ful of orange blossoms and myrtle sprigs, ~~in one hand~~, and a box, ~~in the other.~~)

FLORENCE

What's this ?

HENRY

Orange-blossoms and myrtle.

FLORENCE

Ot - !

HENRY

(Takes up a few twigs,) ~~the water running over~~
See ? Soaking them in water to keep 'em fresh till tomorrow. And wait.
(Puts away the basin, opens the box and takes out a bridal veil. Unfolds it.

FLORENCE

A veil --! How beautiful ! Embroidered---and so long !

HENRY

This for you ---
Wraps her in the veil. Florence kneels down to him, tries to kiss his feet but Henry raises her up. A silent pause. Then the bell rings. Florence hastens into the other room. Henry goes to open the door.)

MRS. RAY

(Enters with a small package, fanning herself.)
Phew, hot ! Where's Florence ?

FLORENCE

(Reenters without the veil.)
Here I am.

MRS. RAY

(Unwraps the package.)
Here is a match-holder, and this is a glass-bar for towels. Here are the screws and sockets.

HENRY

Fine.! But really Mother - this is too much --

MRS. RAY

I have to attend to these things. Y o u r mother wont do anything !

HENRY

I - er - thought, we have our home more or less complete.

MRS. RAY

Complete ? I shouldnt call t h a t complete. Do you know, its little things like these, as make up the home !

HENRY

I fully appreciate it.

FLORENCE

But Mamma, this match-holder is of tin, it'll rust.

MRS. RAY

You'll have to polish it.

FLORENCE

What do you suppose, I'm going to become a drudge ?

HENRY

You'll have to excuse me, both of you, IIm going to arrange the pictures in the dining-room.
(Exit into dining-room.)

MRS. RAY

Have you spoken to him about it ?

FLORENCE

No. And I dont intend to either. I already told you so. So its no use.

MRS. RAY

What do you mean itsno use ? He s h o u l d transfer the property. I mean his share to you.

FLORENCE

I dont mind, if he does not.

MRS. RAY

What do you mean you fool ! Why shouldnt he transfer the property ? What are you marrying a cripple for ?

Florence
Mother ! (Runs into bedroom as Mrs. Ray is about to follow her Henry enters)
Mrs. Ray
Henry dear ! - y - er - wanted to speak to you about - your Property, see !

Yes ? — Henry

MRS. RAY

Er - its rather mixed up - this about your share - you know -

HENRY

I really dont think its necessary to -

MRS. RAY

Oh , this is very important . As it is, you're neither here nor there. Everyone ought to know where he stands . In case your mother dies - It seems to me that you're entitled to a bigger share , than your sister; because its you managing the whole business - see ?

HENRY

But there is absolutely no reason for apprehensions of this kind - and we agreed to leave everything as it is,meanwhile .

MRS. RAY

You mean , you'll keep on supporting your mother and sister ?

HENRY

This is a question of giving them their due - the business and the property is theirs, dont forget that Mother "-

MRS. RAY

But you are doing all the work !

HENRY

That cant be helped .

MRS. RAY

Thats why I say - :In the first place you ought to insure your life - in case of death or accident -- see ?

HENRY

I do not expect any more accidents to happen . I should judge , that one accident in a man's life , is enough . And as to possible death - she would be amply provided for. She is legally entitled to my share . So we'd better leave well enough alone "

MRS. RAY

It seems to me, that the best thing would be - to make out some sort of legal document, say transfer the property ----

FLORENCE

(Opening the door) ~~Hyetteedly~~

Mother, arent you ashamed of yourself ? !

~~Mother - I will not have you behave as yourself~~

MRS. RAY

You 've been listening at the door !

FLORENCE

I have !

MRS. RAY

FOR SHAME ! Is this the way a decent lady should behave ? Is this the way my daughter should behave ?

FLORENCE

I dont want you to meddle here .-

MRS. RAY

I mean your best !

FLORENCE

I can take care of myself .

MRS. RAY

Allright young lady ! And one thing I'll tell you , d ont come to me in case anthing happens --

(The bell is heard. Henry goes to open it .)

MRS. MASON (in the other) On

(Enters, carrying a cage in which there is a pigeon. An one hand, a basket Hello, hello everybody ! (To Mrs. Ray) How are you dearie ?

MRS. RAY

I was wondering where you were on a busy day like this ? -

MRS. MASON

Oh dearie, I'm sick with hustling . And there is nobody to take care of the store .

MRS. RAY

Well one does not get married every day .

MRS. MASON

H en baby, here is your pigeon .

HENRY

You d i d bring it then -

MRS. MASON

I wont keep it in the store, now, that you have a home of your own.
(Henry takes up the cage, stroking the pigeon with a finger through the open-work .)
Why should you waste your time there ? You know it hinders you in your work
Let Florence take care of it,.

FLORENCE

And who'll take care of your son ?
(Both she and Henry are fussing with the bird)

MRS. MASON

Sure she's right . Aint I telling him ? What in the name of Heaven do you need a crippled bird for ? A bird with a broken wing ? If it were whole, well -

MRS. RAY

Where did he get him ?

MRS. MASON

Picked him up in the street . There is a flock there, you know , near our store. Across the street .

HENRY

I tell you its getting better .

MRS. MASON

You're crazy to want your time on a sick bird ! To take it out every day, have it walk an' fly an' all that - and to think that this has been going on for the past six weeks !

FLORENCE

(Tiking to the pigeon)
My little little little snookums !... (To Henry) I might as well tell you - if you're going to take away any of m y time, one minute's attention, I'll throw him to the cats . Remember ! I want you to let m e care for him . Get me ? (Puts down the cage on the floor.)

HENRY

(Makes a military salute)
Yes Ma'am !

MRS. MASON

Honest its a shame to keep him on account of his beeing crippled --every one'll think he's like his -

FLORENCE

(Anticipating what she is about to say, interrupts her with an innocent air.)
Mother ! I have something for you. A fine fine fine thing. A very fine thing ! Guess what it is ?
(The bell is heard. Mrs. Mason being nearest the door opens it.)

TOM COOKLY

(Enters)
How do you do , everybody ?

HENRY

Oh, its you, is it ? I thought you wouldnt care to remember about the pictures -
(Both mothers-in-law having nodded coldly engage in conversation.)

TOM

(With droll exaggeration)
I not care to remeber ? !

HENRY

Come , have a look at the way they are arranged in the dining-room -

TOM

Yes Sir - !
(To Florence with forced coldness)
How are you this afternoon ?

FLORENCE

Thank you ---how is yourself ?

TOM

Still alive - as you see .

HENRY

Say I all forgot ! How about her portrait ? I thought you were going to bring it today ?

TOM

Just a little more - patience. The day isnt gone yet, is it ? Where are those pictures ?
(Henry leads goes into dining-room Tom following .)

HENRY

Here go in and look around . I thought you wouldnt come so I arranged them as best I could myself. Exit TOM into dining-room, The bell rings.)

MRS. MASON

It seems to me , they ought to use the entrance through the kitchen--this carpet --its a pity - its so expensive.

MRS. RAY

(Goes to open the door.) They are using the other door for themselves ar you Henry? But strangers - they would have to pass through the dining-room

(Opens the door)

SOPHIE

(Enters.)
Did I drop a glove here ? (To Henry) dont stare at me ! (Notes the glove on the table and fetches it.) Here it is ! See ? I wouldnt have come back ---

MRS. RAY

Why, whats the matter ?

MRS. MASON

Always quarreling, always quarreling ! Not a minute's rest do I get from them ! I thought that now -

SOPHIE

Of course its his furniture , its his victrola. Everything in this place is bought with his money. But even so - dont you think that his sister too may listen to that victrlaa once in a while ? - Mind you once in a while - like any stranger . Because its bought for strangers isnt it ?

FLORENCE

Strangers ? No, its for us !

SOPHIE

And who is " u s " , pray ? Do I also come in under the category ?

HENRY

(Coaxing)
You bet you do . And I promise, because you gave in this time, I'll buy every record you chose . (Patting her on the back.) Because you did give in yourself, didnt you ?
(Florence turns away in disgust Mrs. Ray following , they remain in the farther end of the room talking quietely to each other.)

SOPHIE

(To Henry half reconciled)
You're a fine one !

MRS. MASON

That's the way ! Make it up .I hate to see my children fight ! I'm going to have a look at the kitchen.

SOPHIE

Your children ! It's he fighting always .

MRS. MASON

Now dont start it all over again .!(Exit dining-room door.)

SOPHIE

Oh, the pigeon is here ! (Goes to table, and tries to reach the bird by putting her hand in the cage.)
Look how he trembles !
(Talking into the cage)
Wht's the matter with you ? (To Henry) Its because you lock him up in the back-room for the night and dont let him get used to us .

HENRY

Leave him alone !

SOPHIE

(takes out the pigeon from the cage, fondles him with her face)
You rascal, you naughty !...Dont scratch ! Ouch !

HENRY

For God's sake, put that poor bird back will you ? Why dont you underetand he has such soft bones - you 're hurting him !

SOPHIE

But I'm kissing him!

HENRY

But he dont want your kissing !

SOPHIE

Look, I'm only kissing him see ?- (Does so)What's the matter now, eh ?
(Strikes the bird with her finger lightly over the head.)
Ungrateful wretch !

HENRY

(Angrily)
Will you please put that bird back ?

MRS. MASON

(Reenters from the dining-room.)
Put him back Sophie ! Are you listening ? There is nobody in the store.
Oh , they'll ruin me ! Have pity, both of you !

SOPHIE

Here, here ! (Puts back the bird) Any time I touch his pigeon he raises hell !

HENRY

Look look , the poor bird , he's suffering ---look how he closes his eyes---

SOPHIE

It's because he has a temper like his master . You too make such faces sometimes - exactly . In every respect like his master ---In e v e r y r e s p e c t -----!
(Looks significantly at Henry, who turns away . Then to Mrs. Mason)
Are you coming ?

MRS. MASON

Her's the key. (Gives her a key. Hurry, I'll follow with Henry immediately (In a lower voice) I haven't been here since Tuesday . One ought to keep one's eyes open, you fool! I dont like that witch of a mother - in-law hanging round here. I've got to look after our own interests, go I tell you !
(Mrs. Mason joins the two women.)

SOPHIE

Sure ! S o m e b o d y has to attend to business . Dont be long, I have an appointment for three o'clock . (As she is about to go out)

TOM

(Enters dining-room door, carrying an etching of a landscape.)
I tell you , Mr. Picture-frame maker , you dont know a thing about either statics or dynamics . I had some job !
(Handing him the picture.)
~~You get this point with better here, is what I mean .~~
This is superfluous

HENRY

(Taking the picture)
That's the reason I asked y ou to come. How is it you say ? ": A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

TOM

(To Sophie)
You here ? Pardon me, I didnt notice you !

SOPHIE

You didnt notice me, eh ? Its because there are other young ladies in this room. No wonder one becomes near-sighted --- I see you're helping in the noble work of building up the nest ?---

TOM

Now its your next .

SOPHIE

How about you ? Charity begins at home ! ~~Good-by~~ (Exit) ~~Good-by~~

TOM

She is snappish today !

The two old ladies advance center. Florence joins the two men.)

MRS. MASON

(To Mrs. Ray , producing a small package from her basket)
Now I'm going to show you m y surprise ! !
(All gather curiously around the table. Mrs. Mason unwraps the package and shows an alarm-clock.All Approve of it with a " fine " nice" oh" !

MRS. MASON

(To Mrs. Ray)
You see dearie...The store is so far away now . He w i l l have to get up early, so I thought the best thing would be an alarm-clock . You know, a young coupple-----They might--------
(Whispers something into Mrs. Ray's ear, to which both women laugh. FLORENCE turns away embarrassed. TOM gives HENRY a nudge accompanied by a chuckle.)

MRS. RAY

Did you see the things I brought them just now ? The match-holder an' the glass-bar ? No ? I tell you real cute things . Come into the kitchen I'll show you .
(Both exeunt diningroom door.)

FLORENCE

Wait,I put them in the medicine chest. Its locked I'll open it for you.
(Follows them)

HENRY

(Viewing the dining-room from the door-step)
Old chap, I must say - you know a thing or two . Of course it looks better this way . (Slaps him on the back) You are allright !

TOM

Now now, dont grow patronizing !

HENRY

~~Mind I'm going take that here darling party to get it's mate. Darling, it'll match home I like to look it right here so I won't forget it.~~
~~(Pointing pictures on the wall) I'll put up here on it, you-~~
~~know me, I'm never going forget it now !~~
(Slaps Tom again on the back.) Oh pardon me ! I all forgot. I'm not to be patronising-----Excuse me ! I'm sure you wont mind, You know I'm kind of ---

TOM

I know . Getting married is no trifle .

HENRY

Its an incomparibly greater thing. I say, have you ever forgiven anyone?

TOM

Want to live up to the standard of you namesake ?

HENRY

What if I do ?

TOM

I f you can -?

MRS. MASON and MRS. RAY enter. The latter carrying the box with the veil, and the basin with the flowers. Puts the basin on a chair.

MARS. MASON

Lovely veil. And the blossoms too. Must cost a lot of money.

MRS. RAY

They cost me a fortune.

MRS. MASON

You ought to hurry up, or they'll never make it for tomorrow.

MRS. RAY

Yes they will. They're relatives of mine. That's why I'm leaving the flowers here. I'll manage them very early tomorrow. I want them to be fresh.

MRS. MASON

The kitchen is complete.

MRS. RAY

I chouldnt call t h a t complete. There is a calendar missing.

FLORENCE

(Calling from the dining-room.)
Gentlemen ! Would you mind ? Come here please. I want to ask your opinion.

HENRY

Yes certainly !
Goes with Tom into dining-room.

MRS. MASON

Lovely home .

MRS. RAY

A friend of Florence' got married last month . You ought to see h e r home ! My ! Mahogany furniture - maid service an' all -

MRS. MASON

One does not need a more cosy , well to-do looking home, than this here.

MRS. RAY

Yes, but this furniture is only"mahogany finish " And -- he didnt pay for the furniture yet , did he ?

MRS. MASON

Why should he ? Its a friend of my late husband 's . He took the furniture on a three month's basis , without even as much as a signature. You know, in a place of business, one should keep the cash as long as possible -

MRS. RAY

How about your Sophie, any prospects ?

MRS. MASON

Sophie is allright . Attending college . You ought to see the kind of friends that girl comes together with .

MRS. RAY

"Friends " are allright, but a girl should look around for a f r i e n d-

MRS. MASON

Oh, that does'nt worry me . Everything in due time . My Sophie is not of the catching sort you know - who - would put up with any fellow .

MRS. RAY

Well, a girl will have to have sense, or all the learning in the world, wont help her any -

TOM (E.

(Appears on the threshold of the dining-room and contemplates the interio Yes Ma'amm- that's the way ! (Exit)

MRS. MASON

Learning my dear,is a wonderful thing. Learning is a very wonderful

thing my dear . Now for instance there is your Florence --she dont come up to my Sophie in learning, you know . And my Sophie says she'd rather stay single . than ---(Checking herself.) er -- I never liked that artist fellow -!

MRS. RAY

Why do yo keep him then ?

MRS. MASON

Keep h i m ? That's a good one ! He keeps us, you mean ?!

MRS. RAY

Why - cant you get rid of him at all ?

MRS. MASON

He always hangs aroun' the store . Henry says he needs him , but I dont believe it. I think he sucks Henry . Its up to Florence now, to keep an eye on him .

MRS. RAY

Leave it to me .

MRS. MASON

Oh dearie, these a r e hard times !

MRS. RAY

You bet ! Wont you sit down ?

MRS. MASON

No . Wont y o u sit dow ? I guess I have just as much right to invite you , as y o u have to invite me !
(Calling into the dining-room)
Hen baby ! ?

HENRY

(Appears in the door, dressed for going out.)
Yes ? -

MRS. MASON

There is nobody in the store .

HENRY

I know . I'm coming with you .

MRS. RAY
For Goodness sake, cant a poor fellow even get married ?

HENRY
(To Mrs. Ray)
It'll be allright mother. There are little things that will have to be taken care of . And then I'll be free a whole week.
(Calling into dining -room)
Floo'--!I'll be back here soon.!

MRS. MASON
(Takin Henry's arm)
Are you coming ? ~~I think we'll better go through the hall then down - this carpet - later on pays - its so expensive.~~

HENRY
As you please - (To Mrs. Ray) Goodby Mother !
~~(Mama, Mama, Mama,

TOM

(Noticing the basin)
What do I see ? Orange blossoms. For you - ?

FLORENCE

He insists.

Tom gives an ironical laugh.

FLORENCE

You know, I told him everthing -

TOM

Everything ?

FLORENCE

(Evasively)
Look - how do you like this ?
(Points at desk.)

TOM

Nothing extraordinary. A desk.

FLORENCE

That isnt all. Look what's in there -
(Unlocks the drawer.)
The big thing.

TOM

(Takes out the manuscript with a quick movement.)
So, this is the holy of holies -

FLORENCE

Oh no, you mustnt. Put it back please.

TOM

Why ? Whats the matter? This was written to be red, wasnt it ?

FLORENCE

Yes, but -

TOM

But what ?

FLORENCE
Please, please, Tom. put it back ! Quick !

TOM
Nonsense. I'm going to have a look into it.

FLORENCE
No, you will not. Put it back.! Put it back! Put it back !
(Tries to reach the manuscript, which Tom holds up high.)
Please ! Please !

TOM
One look only, one look. I'll put it back I tell you ! You're the biggest fool I ever saw. Supposing I do have a look into it - what will happen ?

FLORENCE
But he dont like it !

TOM
He does not know what he likes. And you're a silly goose. I can do him a lot of goo d by reading it. If I see there's anything in there, I'll tell people about it.I , with my range of acquaintances - One word is enough to make publishers run after him. I cant do anything for myself as yet - but for others -There is such a thing as publicity, my dear women, and its a darn good thing too, let me tell you !

(then) FLORENCE
Allright. Have a look into it quick, and put it back.

TOM
'Quick'- This needs a little time. But dont you worry. Come I'll show you something -
(Goes to victrola, looks among the records, and puts one on.)
You sit here, and listen to this, while I have a look at it. Its our favorite record.
(One of the latest jazz hits is heard, played by a band.Tom puts the manuscript in his pocket.)
Or rather - lets first have a turn or two. This is your last day of dancing. You'll have to give that up , now.

FLORENCE
I wont think of it.

(Both dance until the last note. Then he clasps her with a long kiss.

FLORENCE
(Wrenching herself loose.)

FLORENCE

Oh, what have I done ? Put it back please ! If he should find out -

TOM

And what if he should find out ?

FLORENCE

Why - that would be terrible !

TOM

You dont know Henry. He'd be only too glad. This would give him a chance to forgive. To play the martyr. You have no idea, of what some people are capable, in order to gain an admirable pause.

FLORENCE

So you think he wont mind ?

TOM

I'm certain. Arent you calling him your Jesus ?

FLORENCE

But this -
(As foot-steps are heard.)
Somebody's coming ! Quick put it back !

TOM

You go open the door.

FLORENCE

Quick, quick, put it back, put it back !
(Goes to open the door. Tom hastens to victrola and adjusts the needle the jazz is again heard.)

HENRY

(Enters with a small package)
Now I'm sure you'll scold me. So better do it now. Dont wait.

FLORENCE

I thought -

HENRY

I know, I know. I'm supposed to be in the store now. But in these days of getting married you decide one thing, and do another. You see, as we were waiting for a car on the corner, I happened to look into a window of an art-shop, and this is what I saw :

(Unwraps the package)
So I sent home both mothers, and went in .
(Takes out a carved figure.)
Tom, old chap, look at this bear !

Isnt he cute ? FLORENCE

Tom ! Do stop this racket, will you ? HENRY
(Tom stops the record, and takes the figure.)
Well, do you think of it ?

Junk . TOM

Everything turns to junk - in your eyes. HENRY

My dear man, you'll admit, that in matters of art, I know a thing TOM
or two.

But explain - why ? HENRY

Dont you see, he is stiff, smooth. If it were really a work of art, TOM
it would have a little more anatomy. A knowledge fo the animal's body.
There would have to be motion , life. There would have to be a silent
play of muscle, and their impressive movements see n under the skin.

But he smiles ! FLORENCE

Yes, he smiles. What else could he do ? TOM

Never mind, he is a fine bear. Give him to me. FLORENCE
(Takes the figure.)

You bet , he is a fine bear. (To Tom) and say, dont you bully me, HENRY
I heard you say the same thing only last week about the paintings of
Sorola.

You have a very poor memory. TOM

HENRY

I guess its you who have the poor memory, or else you shouldnt repeat it. Never mind Flo, give him th most prominent place.

TOM

Now I'm going to fetch the painting.

HENRY

Fine !I'llRun along. I'll wait here take it home, and frame it today.

FLORENCE

(Motioning to Tom not to go.)
Oh dont ! Dont leave us so soon !

TOM

I'll be back soon.

FLORENCE

Why cant you postpone it for some other day ?

TOM

I'll be back in a jiffy. I'll take the subway. So long folks !

HENRY

Hurry !

FLORENCE

(Follows him to the door, motioning to him more persistently. Tom pretends not to see it. Goes out hastily.

HENRY

(Takes out a small package from his pocket)
And here is a hundred sheets of paper. ~~Must have ordinary consulted. Summer's sheep.~~ So I killed two birds with one stone. And lest we forget, let me put them in right now.
(Goes to desk.)

FLORENCE

(Barrs his way.)
Hen - come here.

HENRY

What is it ?

FLORENCE

I want to tell you something.

HENRY

Yes - ?

FLORENCE

You forgot to kiss me when you came in -

HENRY

Is that all ? I'm always willing to make good my arrears -
(Kisses her, and turns again to desk.)

FLORENCE

I dont call this kissing. You ought to be ashamed of yourself !
(Henry embraces her strongly. Then turns again to desk.)
Wait, I wantto to tell you something ! Its more important than this !
Hen -

HENRY

Yes ?

FLORENCE

I s--

HENRY

What is it little book-keeper ?

FLORENCE

I have something on my mind ---
(Draws him down on the settee.)

HENRY

I'm listening.

FLORENCE

I'm afraid to tell you.

HENRY

What is it ? You havent committed a murder ?

FLORENCE

No, but I - danced.

HENRY

Is that all ?

FLORENCE

With Tom.

HENRY

(Laughs hysterically)
One needs a partner.

FLORENCE

Dont laugh so -

HENRY

But its funny -

FLORENCE

But I have been doing it, ever since you put in that victrola. Without you knowing it -

HENRY

Terrible thing ! What shall I do to you for that ? After all , you are a little little slip of a girl, with a big big conscience, that must confess, always confess, that wouldnt bear one tiny bit of sin !

FLORENCE

I not only danced -

HENRY

(Grows attentive)
You - not only danced ?

FLORENCE

I ---

HENRY

Florence - !

(Pause)

FLORENCE

I know - I am a mean --indecent ---

HENRY

Today - ?

FLORENCE

No no no ! A long time ago ---

HENRY

Before you knew me ?

FLORENCE

(Sobbing)

No - after - but -- I ~~know~~

HENRY
Why did you do that ? Dont you care for me ?

FLORENCE
I do I do I do care! But I was crazy--and he ----Oh ---

HENRY
That it should have been he -

FLORENCE
Its just because- he was your friend --I was jealous--I thought--he must be somebody----if he's your friend-----and so-------

HENRY
You paid him. Very generous. Your kind.

FLORENCE
I wish -you'd hit me.

HENRY
Hit you ?

FLORENCE
~~Yes/--it/would/be/--/such/a/relief---~~
Yes, why dont you ? It would be - such a relief.

HENRY
Poor girl-- youre ill--that's what you are. Ill with------
(Whistles some mournful melody)

FLORENCE
(Crying)
Do hit me - !

HENRY
I am not of the - hitting sort. I ------
(Strokes her hair. Florence cries more vehemently.)
And now -- your conscience is at ease again. Its nice to have one's own private Jesus, eh ? Comfortable too ----

FLORENCE
I broke your heart.

HENRY
I-- have no heart. ~~You little pitiful poor thing,~~
~~You wretched wretch~~

(Goes to desk Florence follows him.)

FLORENCE

Dont-!

HENRY

Why - ?

FLORENCE

Dont ! Not yet ! Sit with me a little --I---feel bad.

HENRY

It wont take long.Just put them in. Here is the key. Its open.
(Opens the drawer, and stares at the empty case.)
Where is the thing ?

FLORENCE

I - dont know.

HENRY

What do you mean , you dont know ? You kept the key. It was locked before I left !

FLORENCE

I - Tom.

HENRY

Tom - ?
(Turns pale. Trembles.)
What haveyou --done with it ?

FLORENCE

I-- Tom has taken it --just for a few minutes---to have one look- he'll ptt it back---he'll bring-

HENRY

(Jumps at her shaking her.)
You have given it to him ? !

FLORENCE

Just for a few minutes -- he'll soon----

HENRY

You have given it to him--! That ! That too-------!

FLORENCE

I didnt mean it ! I swear ! He took it out himself ! By force--he----

HENRY

(Hurls her on the floor.)
You ---------bum !

(Collapses on a chair his face covered. Florence in dumb terror crouches to her feet. After a silent pause Henry gets up resolutely goes to 'phone and calls.)
Decatur 5310. - Yes - hello ! Elite Funiture Co ? ? - This is Mason talking. Henry Mason. That you Mr. Burton ? How do you do ? ! Listen Mr. Burton, I want you to send for the furniture ! - Yes - And this immediately ! What is it ? - Oh well, I'll explain later !

FLORENCE

Why ? why ?

HENRY

(Talks on)
What ? You cant ? In that case Mr. Burton, I dont assume any responsibilities whatever! Oh well, you canmmanage. Its only a short distance! What ? Out ? Hire a truck. I'll pay. Yes. Immediately. The landlord might detain it. You know, I signed a two years lease !

FLORENCE

Why ? Why ? What are you doing ? I'm going to get it back. I'm going to getch it back- -!

HENRY

(Talking on)
Now you're talking ! Allright then. I'll be waiting. What ?Your own truck is back ? Fine. I assure you, you shatnt be the loser. And besides I'll serve you a good turn. What ? Fine. Bye bye!
(Hangs up)

FLORENCE

You mean - you wont marry me ?

HENRY

I wont.

FLORENCE

On account of this thing ? On account of this thing ? Tell me !
(No answerfrom Henry)
I shouldnt mind- if you'd refuse me for what I told you about myself but for a trifle like that - you're crazy to do it for a trifle like that. You're crazy ! Now that everbody knows I'm to be married tomorrow- What will people say ? You are lying ! You're lying !You're a mean beastly coward ! Its not on account of that !Its because I told you about the dancing !

HENRY

Do you like it better taht way ?

FLORENCE

Why dont you say so, openly ? You didnt suppose I was going to abstain from dancing ?become a nun by marrying you, abstain from dancing ?

Its hard enough I have to put up--

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

HENRY

With a cripple ? (Laugh)

FLORENCE

I didnt mean to say that .-

HENRY

Its hard enough you have to put up with a cripple, eh ? Now, you wont have to ---

FLORENCE

What do you mean, I wont have to ? I wont stand for it ! I wont ! Now , that everybody knows ! I wont I wont I wont be jilted by -

HENRY

A cripple ? You will------!(Closes his eyes in pain)

FLORENCE

[illegible]! I tell you you'll be sorry sir ! You'll be sorry the rest of your life-time !
(Henry gives a short laugh)

FLORENCE

(Screams)
You crooked devil !

HENRY

You dont have to be insulting to a stranger ---
(The bell rings.)

FLORENCE

I wont let you break up my home ! This is m y home ! You are taking advantage because I have no friend in this world. Because I'm an orphan. Because I have no father to protect me !
(The bell is again heard.)

HENRY

There there. Cut out this mushy stuff, will you ?
(Goes to open the door. A voice from without is heard :"Express " ? to which Henry answers)
Wait a minut there ! (Closes door)

FLORENCE

(Hysterically) [illegible]
I'll get it back ! I'll get it back ! I'm going to get it back !
(Puts on her hat and light wrap, that have lain [illegible] on one of the chairs and hurries out through the door.)

HENRY

Opens the door and
(Calls into the hallway.)
Allright !
(Two express-men [illegible] appear in the door.)
How many are there of you ?

FIRST EXPRESSMAN

Four .

HENRY

Allright, you two remain here, and you two(Talking into hall-way) attend to the rest of the house. There is separate door in to the hall from the kitchen, and to this room.(Pointing to door right.)

Two express-men enter and begin carrying out the things. Soon after a bustle is heard behind the scene of heavy steps , going in and out with the furniture. Henry tears down the draperies. One of the men approaches

the desk, ~~[illegible]~~, as he gets a hold of it, Henry notices him.)

HENRY

Wiat ! Wait a minute ! Why dont you take the other things first ? There is the victrola for instance ------

FIRST EXPRESSMAN

Allright Sir. (Takes the victrola.)

Henry remains standing by the desk until all the things are carried out.

SECOND EXPRESSMAN

(Approaches Henry, while the First Expressman rolls up the carpets.) All the things are out Sir ----

HENRY

Allright, take it ---
(The express-man carries out the desk. The other one following with the carpets. A shout is heard from the hall-way "All ready " ? To which the other voices answer in chorus : " ready ". Then is heard a shutting of doors. Henry remains contemplating the four empty walls. Then he takes up the cage with the pigeon, and walks across the room, with a hollow reverberating step. As he reaches the door left, he turns around once more, raises the cage to a level with his face, and talks into it :)

HENRY

W e are going home ----------
(As he puts his hand on the door-knob -)

The curtain falls.

THE SAVIOR.

THE THIRD ACT.

The late afternoon of the same day in HENRY'S ~~saloon~~ picture - frame store. The cage with the pigeon is hanging on the wall near the work-table. The victrola from the second act is seen near the back-room door. Otherwise there is no change. As the curtain rises, the quarreling voices of both Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Ray are heard, shouting repetitions of: " Yes ma'm " - and : "Is that so " - Mrs. Ray standing in a bellicose attitude, with Mrs. Mason behind the work- table.)

MRS. RAY

Yes ! I'm going to stay right here ! What are you going to do about it ?

MRS. MASON

(In a sweetly bilious voice)
Dearie - there are means to make you go. If you insist on makin ' a racket, and damaging trade, there are policemen in this neighborhood---

MRS. RAY

Go ahead ! I'd like to see you do it ! Go ahead !

MRS. MASON

I told you before , I got your number. I know your sort, you and your daughter's !

MRS. RAY

(Shaking a fist at her)
I'll show you yet! Wait !

MRS. MASON

I told him as soon as I caught sight of you - remember says I , there is going to be trouble .

MRS. RAY

You bet there is going to be trouble ! <u>You bet</u> ! And dont you kid yourself that you're always going to keep him tied to your apron strings, to sponge on him , to make him slave here ! I know very well, that you're at the bottom of all this ----!

HENRY enters main door. Both women grow silent. He proceeds with a slow step toward the work-table , where he dons his working-coat, and sits down to work behind the table, Mrs. Mason having receded .)

MRS. RAY

(Addressing him in a lower voice, cowed by his calm demeanor .) What do you mean by doing a thing like that ?

HENRY

I'm sorry Madam , but it couldnt be helped .

MRS. RAY

You're sorry then ? What urged you to do a thing like that ?

HENRY

It's really hard to tell , Madam --

MRS. RAY

Allright, let bygones be bygones . It's no use crying over spilled milk . The flat is yet to let, and your friend will put the furniture back, any time you ask him ---

HENRY

I'm sorry, but this is out of the question ---
(Mrs. Mason gives a scornful laugh.)

MRS. RAY

You mean, you are going to commit an outrage like that ? !

HENRY

I am ---!

MRS. MASON.

Yes he is-----!

HENRY

Mother, I beg you ----!
(Mrs. Mason turns away.)

MRS. RAY

(Controlling with difficulty her rising anger.)
How about the sent out invitations ?

HENRY

That - can easily be helped . You can insert a little notice in some news-paper stating, that the wedding ~~that the wedding~~ has been post-poned indefinitely --oh, or anything .

MRS. RAY

(With an outburst of rage)
And how about my daughter's reputation ? !

HENRY

(With emphasis)
Your daughter's r e p u ta t i o n !---

MRS. RAY

You Sir ! My daughter's reputation ! What are you going to do about t h a t ? ! Now its y o u who are responsible for it !

HENRY

I------?

MRS. RAY

Yes you, y o u !

HENRY

We'd better not talk about t h a t now----
(Mrs. Mason gives a scoraful laugh)
again

MRS. RAY

(Spluttering with anger)
Look at the way, she's standing and laughing there ! Full of venom !

MRS. MASON

Well I'm glad for once that it so happened !

HENRY

Mother ! I beg you ----

MRS. RAY

I know you did it, you grouchy hag !

HENRY

Now now, Madam - I want you to leave my mothr out of this ! I'm repeating it again : It's I , I , who am responsible for that . Ask yourdaughter, and she'll tell you ---

MRS. RAY

In that case, I'm going to have the law on you ! I a m g o i n g t o h a v e y o u a r r e s t e d !

HENRY

You can do anything you please, Ma'am .---

MRS. RAY

I a m going to have the law on you ! And you old hag, are ypt going to starve to death ! I'll see to that !
(Goes towards door.)
I'll see to t h a t !

MRS. MASON

Begone shrew !

MRS. RAY

I'll see to that !
(Exit with a bang.)

MRS. MASON

The shrew ! Serves her right !

HENRY

Mother ---If you dont mind , I want to be left alone tonight .---

MRS. MASON

You dont have to be put out 'account of ---- ?

HENRY

Do you promise ? And please d o keep away Sophie for tonight at least .---

MRS. MASON

If you insist - But I ask you again, not to take it too much to heart- believe me, everything is to the best-- er--I wanted to ask you - -- if you dont mind - Sophie - or - insisted on keeping the victrola - They brought it here an hour ago - its right here - ----------

HENRY

The victrola --! Oh why --! ?
(Controlls himself and patting her on the back utters a calm:)
Allright mother----will you remember what I asked you ---?

MRS. MASON

Allright, no on will disturb you . Oh my heart goes so fast ---ever since you told me what had happened --- and that I was right, and that you decided to give in, the last moment---and stay yet single for a while--- But, Hen baby----tell me the truth ---isnt there, isnt there anything else ----Its so hard to believe , that its on account of me that -----tell me is she a decent ---?

HENRY

~~(With expression)~~
Mother ! I dont want to hear another word !

MRS. MASON

Allright , allright --I thought--I'd only ask you ---Sophie say-----or-- I'm sure as ~~soon~~ soon as you quiet down a bit, you're going to tell me more about it, ain'it baby ?--- Tell mamma all --!

HENRY

(With disgust)
Now mother, you promised something , didnt you ? !

MRS. MASON

Its only for tonight you want me to keep away from the store, ain'it ?

HENRY

Only for tonight -

MRS. MASON

Its hard to keep out Sophie. She will have her way . Especially now that the victrola is here.

HENRY

Take it out then. Have it taken out !

MRS. MASON

Allright, I'll take it out into the back-room, meanwhile. There is place there. (Opens the door of the back-room as if to examine it, then turns back

MRS. MASON

(Nothing)
I forgot to tell you. Only one word . You know the old gentleman who was here. The one you promised the pictures for today . ? I told him to call tomorrow .

HENRY

(Making an impatient gesture)
I'm working on them now .

MRS. MASON

Now , I wont bother you any more .
(About to ascend the back-stair and turns back again.)
Only one single word , if you dont mind --- er - did she -- do you expect her in tonight ?---

HENRY

(Sternly)
Whom ?----

MRS. MASON

Er -- her . You know who I mean --- Florence.

HENRY

(Curtly)
No . !

MRS. MASON

Allright I believe you. I only asked because I want to go out to a show with Sophie so you wont be bothered -- But if she's to come -- I'd rather stay and protect you.
(Exit into back-room)

SOPHIE

(Comes down the stairs)
Mamma , Mamma !

HEIR

Who is there again ?! For the love of Mike, cant a body be left alone for one single hour ? !

SOPHIE

I just now heard the cheerful news. I congratulate you ! Very well you did !

HENRY

I dont ask your opinion--!

SOPHIE

(~~Hysterically~~)
You dont have to be cross--- Hen----dont be angry---believe me , you did the best thing on earth----
(Tries to adjust his tie)
Hen---dont take it to heart -----

HENRY

(Recoiling from her touch)
Dont --- !Oh dont ---! Pity---! I'll stand anything but pity from y o u -----!

SOPHIE

What's the matter with m e ?Look at the way he shrinks from my touch ! As if ~~though~~ I were a poisonous snake !

HENRY

Dont mind me----dont--- I - am --I beg you , I want to be left alone tonight ----

SOPHIE

Its no use raving -- you can still reconcile your------

HENRY

(In a rage,calling)
Mamma ---!

MRS. MASON

(Reenters from back-room and beckons Sophie to her)
Come here, I wanted to tell you something--

SOPHIE

Whats the matter , why must I go out ? Supposing I dont feel like it ? Supposing ~~that~~ I feel like remaining right here ?

MRS. MASON

A nice kind of daughter you are---you ought to be ashamed of yourself--- you ought to take me out to a show, now that I feel so down-hearted---

SOPHIE

Why - what reason is there to be down-hearted ? I told you he might yet reconcile -----

HENRY

(Throwe his work from him , shattering a glass of a frame to fragments) You get out of here ----!

SOPHIE

(Frightened)
Look at him , look at him --

HENRY

You get out of here, of I'll-------!

(Mrs. Mason takes Sophie by the hand and leads her up staire.)

SOPHIE

He certainly is crazy !
(Both exeunt)

Henry remains standing awhile pressing his temples. Thenbracing himself up with an effort he gathers the fragments of glass, sweeping away the rest, after which he sits down to work.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

HENRY

[illegible]

FLORENCE
(Enters main door with the manuscript.)
Henry - here it is.

HENRY takes the manuscript hesitatingly, contemplates it, and throws it into a corner.)

FLORENCE
What are you doing ?
(As no answer is forthcoming)
But its allright ! Its allright ! Nothing happened to it !

HENRY
It does not matter.

FLORENCE
But it d o e s matter ! I tell you its whole ! I swear ! My word of honour !

HENRY
Your word of h o n o u r.

FLORENCE
Oh stop it ! Hen - do take it back ! Its whole I tell you ! And --wont you not please forgive me ? But this once - But this once- Jesus ---!
(Tries to reach his hand , which he persistently withdraws.)

HENRY
Young Lady, you can spare yourself this humiliation.

FLORENCE
You wont , you wont be so cruel ! You'll forgive me, you'll forgive me! I'm sure you will, but this once !

HENRY
It pains me to see you - waste your efforts.

FLORENCE
Dont you care for me any more ?
(No answer.)
Dont you care any more ?

HENRY
No.

FLORENCE

You're lying ! You're lying. Its this . Its your anger talking. Doing this thing. Because I - But its your own fault. Havent you yourself told me of how wonderful it was to forgive ? Of the happiness one feels ?

HENRY

I'm tired of being a walking confessional.

FLORENCE

But didnt you yourself -? Cant you see, I misunderstood. I-- for Heaven's sake, cant you forgive me but this once ?

HENRY

No.

FLORENCE

I see. Its no use talking. Oh well p I suppose its my fate - You are not angry on account of the scene I made there, are you ?

HENRY

No. One should strike back.

FLORENCE

Its different words you're saying now.

HENRY

You are not used to them, I understand. But little Miss, dont expect others, to always bear the cross for you. ~~Pay everybody like you~~ ~~burden.~~
~~(Florence/cries)~~

FLORENCE

(Crying)
Good bye -!

HENRY

Good bye.

(As she is nearing the door)

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

TOM

(Enters Embarrassed, [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
(Disappears back away)
I wanted - I came - to tell you, that I am to blame for the whole damned thing....I thought the best thing would be - to produce myself- Here I am -- Shoot me. Do anything with me !

HENRY

You can save yourself the trouble . [illegible]

TOM

You are a small burgeois. Both . in your way of thinking. and mode of life . [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

TOM

Supposing I did look into this big mystery of all ages - ? You behaved like a fool, that, anyone will tell you. If I were in your place, I'd say - go hang ! You pried into my secret, I am going to pry into yours- if I can. You ridicule me, I'm going to ridicule y o u in the future. Be more of a man. Learn to fight and win ! By the way, give me that picture from the window. I think I have a buyer.

(To Florence, who leans on the wall sobbing.)

You Miss , ought to be ashamed of yourself. To acknowledge defeat so openly, fie ! Well well, folks, I did my best. I came in, offered myself as a butt. The man rejects me, it isnt my fault. I admit it. I've sinned, pray punish me. What more can I do ?

HENRY

A sting of conscience ?

TOM

Conscience ? There aint no such animal.

HENRY

Queer thing - but people do like to have clear consciences with regard to-my precious self. And why not ? They can afford it ! A cripple. (Laughs hysterically)

Its funny, bu I can name more people who didnt lie to me a number of truth-loving people that would delight the hearts of the promoters of humanity - And so I keep saying All ye, heavy-laden with your shabby truths, come unto me , and ye shall find rest.----!

(Laugh.) Goes to take out the picture from the window.

FLORENCE

(Raises a fist as if to strike Tom.)

Oh you - !

TOM

Dont get hysteric young Lady, you know, that dont work with me.

HENRY

(Hands Tom the painting.)

Here. The saddest, or rather, funniest thing about it is - that y o u are right.

TOM

(Taking the canvas.)

So all this nonsense of forgiveness an' all that stuff does not work after all ? eh ? Leastways not in reality ? Its one thing to talk, and quite another matter to do things !

HENRY

A challange ?

(Goes to victrola and adjusts a record. The jazz from the second act is heard.)

TOM

But y o u are cynical ! Or do you want to create a third degree atmosphere ? Ridiculous ! You know, you cant put one over on me. You think I'm embarrassed because of the dancing, eh ? Dont make a fool of yourself. I shouldnt have become the man I pride myself to be, if I were to let trifles like these embarrass me. However I'll drop in later, and we'll thresh out this question thoroughly. Meanwhile so long.

HENRY

Wait ! What's your hurry ? Come here !

TOM

Yes, ? what can I do for you ?

HENRY

Come here.

TOM

Well, what is it ?

HENRY

(Grabs him by the collar and drags him out the whole length of the store. Too much dignity --!!Too much nonchalance--! Too much superior airs--! Too much truth !

TOM

(Struggling to get free.)
What's this ? What's this ? What's this ?

HENRY

This - for telling the truth ! You lived on my bounty, you should have lied like any insect !
(Throws him out into the street and the canvas after him. Closes the door goes to the victrola, and adjusts the needle anew. The jazz is heard from the beginning.

FLORENCE

Stop it ! Stop it!

HENRY

I thought you liked jazz-
(Goes to back-store door and turns the key. Then fastens the bolt on the stock-room door.)

FLORENCE

What are you doing ?

HENRY

Dont be afraid. I'm not going to murder you. You know the front-door is always open. Its simply protecting you from undesirable intrusion.

FLORENCE

You do care for me then! You dont want your family to annoy me. Henry, I beg you -- Have pity on me. I meant no wrong - I swear, I love you. I - cant give you up ! I cant !
(Clings to him, Henry tries to free himself of her, but finally succumbs and clasping her forces her into some kind of rhytmic step.)

HENRY

Dance with me ! Dance with me ! Dance with a crooked man !

FLORENCE

(In terror tries to tear herself loose.)

HENRY

(Panting)
A crooked dance ! A crooked dance !

FLORENCE

Oh -----!

(He twists her body, whirling round and round in mad contortions

moving his limbs spasmodically turn after turn, until FLORENCE through a very strong effort, wrenches herself loose, and runs out hair dishevelled from the store. A Knocking is heard on back-stair door.

HENRY

(Panting stretches his arms after her)
Come----come---come---!
(Follows her a few steps straggling, then collapses, falling halfways across the counter.)

(THE WOMAN from the first act enters, carrying a wrapped up picture. Lingering a moment at the entrance she advances, and seeing Henry over the counter she bends over him,

THE WOMAN

Whats the matter with you ? Arent you feeling well ?
(Th knocking on the door is again heard.)

HENRY

(Staggers to his feet.)
I------

THE WOMAN

What has happened, what has happened ?

HENRY

Excuse me---a---little head-ache---

THE WOMAN

Shall I call your mother ?

HENRY

(Alert)
No, thanks---I'm ---I'm quite well----what is it you wish please ? I----
(Strokes his fore-lock into shape. Braces himself up) Yes Ma'am ?

THE WOMAN

Will you frame this picture for me ?

HENRY

Certainly .

THE WOMAN

Now look here . The last time I was in, I made up my mind never to come in here again. But then I thought of your father, who framed my first picture about fifteen years ago - his was the only store in this neighbor - hood- and - I changed my mind .

HENRY

You are telling this to me, any time you bring in a new picture Madam--

THE WOMAN

I do . But it never yet helped any.

HENRY

Allright Ma'am -

THE WOMAN

Will you make it for tomorrow, sure ?

HENRY

I--- dont promise .

THE WOMAN

What ----? You dont promis e ?

HENRY

I am very busy now --

THE WOMAN

In that case - I am n o t going to leave the picture ! I can imagine how much I'll have to wait, now, that you dont even promise---

HENRY

You can never tell --

THE WOMAN

(Hesitatingly)
But cant you give me an idea, a proximity, more or less ?

HENRY

Next week perhaps -

THE WOMAN

Allright, I'll take one more chance - Next week then, remember. Regards to your mother. (HENRY thanks with a nod. Exit woman.)

As the door closes , he takes the picture as usual to some remote corner, but as he is about to deposit it , he stops , reflecting a moment, then takes it back and places it on the table next to his work. The knocking at the door is again heard, but this time louder. HENRY opens the back-stair door.

MRS. MASON

(Enters.)
You have frightened me to death----oh my heart---why have you looked yourself in ? I thought----Sea baby, you dont take it to heart do you ?--- In the beginnigg I heard the victrola..it was so lively... I though you and Sophie had made it up amongst yourself....(Handing him a small packaged Here is a pound of hemp-seed for your pigeon... I bought it today.... you know mixed food is cheaper..and they of the bird-store told me that you spoil the bird if you feed it on that alone, it wont eat anything else...still---for your sake---

HENRY

Thank you mother---but you promised something, do you remember ?

MRS. MASON

Oh yes, you want to be alone --allright I'm going---only I wanted you to help me move that victrola into the back-room so Sophie wont disturb you----

HENRY

Allright.
(Moves victrola into backroom. Mrs. Mason helps him.) Now, mother---

MRS. MASON

I know what you want of me. I'm going. Look at that pigeon now, isnt he restle ss ?--Every day at sunset he gets that way. Take care of yourself----dont be downhearted.---
(Exit into back-room.)

HENRY goes to the cage , opens it, takes out the pigeon and puts him on the window-sill. He raises the shade. A reddish part of the setting sun shines into the window.

Henry stroking the pigeon talks to him :)

HENRY

We are restless now, arent we ? Any time we see a flock up yonder, we want to go too, dont we ? Our wings flutter flutter. We turn a little eye up ,to see the world in the Heavens - and then we turn another little eye up, to see it again. We turn one little ear to listen to noises in the air, to tales of busy wings, and then we turn another little ear, to listen again. And our wings flutter flutter flutter. Just so. We stretch one wing along with one little leg, the other little leg we stretch with the other little wing - so so. Every day we get a new golden an' purple an' green feather. We are getting charms to please our mate, arent we ? - so we mightn't remain lonely all our life. Every day our wing is getting less sore, and one day when its allright, an' strong an' healthy, we shall fly away away away, straight into the sun !

(SOPHIE steals down the stairs while Henry is talking, and hastens on tip-toe into back-room. Mrs. Mason following remains at the foot of the stairs)

HENRY puts the pigeon on the further end of the sill , and folds his hands. The pigeon flies away. Henry thrusts his head ~~forward impetuously~~ trhough the window, into the direction the pigeon disappeared, then calls out :

HENRY

Mother - ! Mother - !

MRS. MASON

What has happened ? !

HENRY

The pigeon ! He flew away !

MRS. MASON

Didnt I tell you, he'll fly away some day ? And now your labour and ease is all wasted !

HENRY

Bur Mother, he's healthy ! His wing is allright now !

(Pause, during which both look at each other significantly. Mrs. Mason approaches Henry and lays her hand on his head. He suffers it to remain. After a while he turns his eyes up to her, with a painful gaze, and utters

with a voice full of anguish unrestrained, broken :

HENRY

Mother--------!

MRS. MASON

My Son ---! You too will get well some day--!

HENRY

(in a changed voice)
Now little Mother !--

MRS. MASON

I'm going. But promise that you won't worry !

HENRY

I promise .

MRS. MASON

(Listening to stock-room)
Somebody is in. It must be Sophie. I told her I put the Victrola in the back-room.
(Ascends the stairs.)

HENRY sits down to work, hammering away at a frame diligently. The glare of the setting sun falls on the face of the Christ, forming the brightest spot in the room. As the painting stands now, it reflects its light on HENRY' face, who disturbed by the change turns his head towards it. He gets up, and walks slowly to it. "Asi's Death"
From the back-room is heard the humming of HENRY remains lost in contemplation ~~for a minute~~ , hands folded, then breaks down ~~with a worried face~~ at the feet of the Christ .

The curtain falls .